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PROGRESS OF THE WHEAT CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

Broadcast by John Bird, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Friday, November 18, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour.

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KADDERLY:

Tomorrow, Saturday, November 19, will be a busy day in many county Triple-A offices in the winter wheat belt because tomorrow is the deadline for payment of crop insurance premiums in 20 winter wheat states. Undoubtedly, many wheat growers will take advantage of this last chance to pay their premiums and to get crop insurance policies on their 1939 wheat crops. And as the crop insurance program comes up to this important date, here is Cecil Johnson, Secretary of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, with some news about that program.

JOHNSON:

Thank's, Wallace. . . You know, at certain times everybody likes to stand back from their work and check up just what has been done and what it means. Well, after this November 19th deadline, both wheat growers and crop insurance workers will have a chance to measure the significance of the crop insurance program to date.

KADDERLY:

Cecil, I expect you have a pretty good idea of what the results will be on that check-up, so why don't you give us a preview.

JOHNSON:

Well, I can give you some last-minute figures, and some estimates.

KADDERLY:

Fine, Let's have them.

JOHNSON:

Our latest reports show that more than 225,000 farmers have applied for crop insurance protection on their 1939 wheat crops. As of November 14, around 80,000 of these had paid their premiums. More than a million dollars has been received in premium payments, and more than two million bushels of wheat have been put into the insurance reserve.

KADDERLY:

That's quite a start, I'd say. But tell me, Cecil, how many wheat growers will have paid premiums by this tomorrow deadline?

JOHNSON:

Well, I'll make a guess. I'll estimate that when all of these payments are recorded we'll have around 125,000 paid-up applications.

KADDERLY:

Now, let me get this clear, Cecil. These paid-up premiums you're talking about are mainly from the winter wheat belt, aren't they?

(over)

JOHNSON:

That's right. In fact nearly all of them are. You have to keep in mind that the program moves along with the crop season. Tomorrow is the last day for payments in the Great Plains and Midwestern winter wheat States. But we're still taking applications in the Northwest and Pacific Coast states.

KADDERLY:

And in the spring wheat belt?

JOHNSON:

In the spring wheat belt, we won't start collecting premiums in much volume until late winter and early spring.

KADDERLY:

All right. The figures you've given apply only to the principal winter wheat belt then. Now you said something about checking up on what this progress means . . .

JOHNSON:

I'd say that it means several important things. First, when the program was launched last spring, certain goals were set. It was hoped that at least 150,000 winter wheat growers would apply in order that the new plan of insuring growing crops against all risks would be given a thorough trial.

KADDERLY:

And more than 225,000 have applied.

JOHNSON:

Yes, we have already exceeded the goal in that respect. Another hope was that crop insurance would be given a wide trial -- that is, that it would be tried out by farmers all over the country -- not in just the so-called "commercial" wheat belt.

KADDERLY:

And how has that worked out?

JOHNSON:

I'm glad to say that as far as winter wheat goes, there will be policies on farms in nearly every county in which winter wheat is a crop of any consequence, from coast to coast.

KADDERLY:

In other words, all farmers will be able to see how the plan works out, right in their own community.

JOHNSON:

That's the best demonstration in the world. If it works on my neighbor's farm, then I know it will work on my farm.

KADDERLY:

Cecil, how about the pioneering phase of crop insurance -- I mean,

this is an experimental program, designed to lead the way for possible insurance for other crops. How does that look at present?

JOHNSON:

I'm glad you brought that up, because the large number of farmers taking out policies and the wide distribution of these policies, assures us of a vast amount of new information on the problem of crop insurance. We will use this information in making improvements in the wheat program, and should Congress decide to extend crop insurance to other crops, the experience gained and the information that has been developed will be of great value.

KADDERLY:

One last question, Cecil. From the experience gained in crop insurance this far with winter wheat, what do you expect in the way of applications from the spring wheat belt?

JOHNSON:

That calls for another estimate, Wallace. For one thing, spring wheat growers will have a lot more time to get all of the details of crop insurance, and to make up their minds to come into the plan. So we expect a higher proportion of growers to sign up. My guess is 75,000 spring wheat growers will apply. That's pretty safe, because we already have more than 20,000 in North Dakota alone.

KADDERLY:

75,000 spring wheat growers -- I'll check with you on that next spring.

JOHNSON:

Before I go, Wallace, I want to remind winter wheat growers in Midwestern and Great Plains states that the only exception to the November 19 deadline is in the case of growers whose premium notices bear a later expiration date. The payments are made at the county Triple-A offices.

KADDERLY:

Thank you, Cecil Johnson, for this round-up on crop insurance news. Farm and Home listeners, you have heard Cecil A. Johnson, Secretary of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, reporting on progress of the wheat crop insurance program.

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